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ABSTRACT

In this sixth annual community assessment, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation surveyed 1,245 registered voters in March 2000. Of the five issues investigated, education was the most important local issue, but there also appeared to be a gap between support for public schools and support of the necessary funding for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system. Overall, the school system got a grade of "C." While there was high confidence in teachers, principals, and the superintendent, there was much less confidence in the School Board or the Board of County Commissioners. The teaching profession was valued, and there was strong support for equity and student diversity, although the community was polarized over student assignment. The understanding of vouchers, charter schools, and the new no-social-promotion policy was minimal, though voters strongly support community involvement in the schools. Voters generally thought that communication between schools and parents was "okay." The questionnaire is included. (Contains 18 tables.) (SLD)

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"PUTTING THE PUBLIC IN PUBLIC EDUCATION"

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2000 Community Assessment

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Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation
Annual Community Assessment 2000

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See also the Community Assessment 2000 Executive Summary and the Slide Presentation 2000.

Funded by Celanese Acetate.

Courtenay Gibbs & Tom Bradbury, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation, Charlotte, North Carolina. June 8, 2000.

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June 2000

Dear Reader,

The Annual Community Assessment is a tool to understand our community's attitudes regarding public education, specifically public education in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina.

Within the Education Foundation, we use the results in part to identify needs in the community that we can fill. For example, this year's survey reveals that there is lack of understanding about such key issues as vouchers, charter schools, and the North Carolina no-social-promotion policies. As a result, the Education Foundation will be preparing this summer several public information pieces on each of these issues.

In addition, this fall we will release the first annual State of Public Education report in which we examine in-depth many of the issues raised in this survey as well as report on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public School System and the Education Foundation's Community Vision Initiative for Quality Public Education.

We invite you to read and use the results presented in this report. The introduction to the report contains some important information about reading and understanding the tables. The Executive Summary, the full report, and a set of power point slides are available on our website (www.cmef.org). Limited copies of this printed report are available.

We also invite your responses and questions. You may email me directly at cgibbs@vnet.net, the Education Foundation at cmef@vnet.net, or call us at (704) 335-0100.

Thank you,

C Gibbs

Courtenay Gibbs, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research and Policy

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Executive Summary*

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation's 6th Annual Community Assessment surveyed 1,245 registered voters in March of 2000.

Highlights include:

- Of five issues investigated, education is the most important local issue, but there also appears to be a gap between support for public schools and support of the necessary funding for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System.
- CMS gets a grade of "C."
- Parents report that communication is okay between schools and parents.
- There is high confidence in teachers, principals, and the Superintendent, but much less in the School Board or Board of County Commissioners.
- The teaching profession is valued.
- There is strong support for equity and diversity.
- The community is polarized over student assignment.
- Understanding of vouchers, charter schools, and the new no-social-promotion policy is minimal.
- Voters strongly support community involvement in schools.

Mecklenburg residents care about education but . . .

Education continues to be the most important local issue. Some 69% of survey respondents rate "improving public schools" either first or second in importance from among five categories, including improving transportation, maintaining the vitality of the local economy, preventing crime, and not increasing taxes.

Although "improving public schools" is far more important than "not raising taxes," there is a disconnect between support for schools and willingness to spend more. Two additional questions relate to this:

- 83% of respondents say that increasing teachers' salaries is highly important along with ensuring equity of resources (82%), renovating and updating schools (76%), and building new schools (58%). But just 42% say that increasing taxes to fund schools is highly important, and 17% feel equally

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* The Executive Summary is available on the website as a stand-alone document. Printed copies are also available from the Education Foundation. Contact us by email cmef@vnet.net or by phone (704) 335-0100.

strongly that increasing taxes is not important. In the 1999 survey, in response to a slightly different question, 47% of respondents strongly supported a tax increase.

- On a question about funding for facilities when schools become overcrowded, 39% give strong support to increasing taxes, but 21% give little to no support.

CMS gets a C, "oldest child's school" ranks higher

When asked to grade Mecklenburg's public schools, almost half of respondents (47%) give CMS a grade of "C," 27% give CMS a "B" and 15% a "D." Only 3% give CMS an "A." As on the national Gallup poll, people here tend to grade their own children's school higher: 23% of CMS parents give a "A" to their oldest child's school and 39% a "B." Further, the majority (61%) of respondents thinks that the schools give students too little work, while just 10% say schools give too much work.

When asked about the overall quality of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System as compared to two years ago, 20% of participants say it is better, 20% say it is worse, 40% say it is about the same, and 20% don't know. In response to an open-ended question, the top three reasons offered for why CMS is better are increasing test scores, the magnet programs, and progress or improvement. The top three reasons for why CMS is worse are discipline, overcrowding, and decision-making.

Of parents with children enrolled in CMS, approximately 46% report that they are "somewhat satisfied" with their children's education, 25% report "very satisfied" and 22% report "somewhat dissatisfied." While African-Americans are more likely than whites to rate CMS better as compared to two years ago, African-American parents are slightly less satisfied than white parents with their children's education.

Communication, schools and parents

Parents of children enrolled in CMS were polled on school-family interaction. Overall,

- 55% "strongly agree" and 31% "somewhat agree" that their eldest child's school encourages parents to get involved in their child's education;
- 30% "strongly agree" and 36% "somewhat agree" that the school has given them ideas about how to improve learning at home;
- 54% "strongly agree" and 26% "somewhat agree" that they receive communication between report cards about their child's progress;

- 38% "strongly agree" and 37% "somewhat agree" that staff members at the school listen to their ideas about their child's education;
- and 47% "strongly agree" and 35% "somewhat agree" that the school works hard to offer meetings, conferences, workshops, and family events at times and places convenient to parents.

Trust and confidence in education leaders varies

Trust in statements and promises made by CMS is not high. Only 15% of respondents rate their level of trust as high, 59% fall in the middle, and 24% have little or no trust.

When asked about confidence in decision-making, 60% of respondents have high confidence in teachers, 49% in principals, 44% in the Superintendent, and 42% in parents. High confidence is lower for the Board of Education (27%) and organizations for the improvement of education (23%). The Board of County Commissioners earns high confidence from just 17% of those polled.

Teaching profession is valued

"Increasing teachers' salaries" is rated highly important by 83% of respondents. When asked if teaching is a valuable profession, 96% "strongly agree" and 3% "somewhat agree."

When asked if would you like a daughter or son of yours to go into teaching, on average 47% say yes, 33% say no and 12% of respondents voluntarily offer that "it depends." In response to an open-ended question, the top reasons why people would like a daughter or son to go into teaching include that it is a good or honorable profession and that teachers can make a difference, be a role model, or be a positive influence. Low salary emerges as the top reason why people would *not* like a daughter or son to go into teaching.

Equity and diversity rate high . . .

Diversity, defined as "providing an environment where children interact with other children of diverse ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds," is rated highly important by 72% of respondents. African-Americans rate diversity somewhat higher than whites, but whites also give it majority support.

Overall, high support for "establishing ways other than student assignment to ensure that students are exposed to racial, social, or economic diversity" is slightly lower at 56%. Again, high support from African-Americans is greater than from whites.

"Ensuring equity of facilities and resources among the schools" is highly important for 82% of respondents. When describing equity, however, 60% of respondents

say that "equity means equally distributing resources including teachers across all schools or students" and 31% say that "equity means some schools receive more resources than others do, so that some children can catch up to others." Only 4% of respondents say "neither or both." While a majority of both whites and African-Americans describe equity as equality, whites more than African-Americans tend to describe equity as equality, while African-Americans more than whites tend to describe equity as "some schools receive more resources."

. . . but there are sharp differences on assigning students

With regard to the much-debated issue of student assignment, 59% of respondents say it is highly important to give "parents and students a choice of schools to attend." African-Americans tend to rate the importance of choice slightly higher than whites do, but there were no great differences between parents and non-parents.

There are noticeable racial differences on busing to achieve racial balance and assigning children to neighborhood schools. Among African-Americans, 51% strongly support busing to achieve racial balance while 15% express little or no support for busing. Among whites, the figures are reversed: 45% strongly do *not* support busing, while just 15% strongly favor it. The racial pattern is similar when respondents are asked about neighborhood assignment "even if it means a number of schools will become racially segregated." Whites at 41% are more likely than African-Americans at 21% to favor neighborhood assignment. Of everyone polled, "strong support" for busing has remained constant between 1999 and 2000 at about 24%; overall "strong support" for neighborhood schools, even if it means some schools will be racially segregated, decreased from 46% in 1999 to 36% in 2000.

Lack of understanding of issues

This year, for the first time, respondents were polled about their knowledge and understanding of school vouchers, charter schools, and the new state rules against social promotion in certain grades.

With regard to knowledge and understanding of school vouchers and charter schools, 58% of the respondents report that they know very little or nothing about either one while 29% report they know something and approximately 13% that they know a lot. This means that less than half of the respondents know something about vouchers and charters.

With regard to new state rules against social promotion, 71% of the respondents report they know nothing or very little. Of the 28% who report they know some or a lot about the standards, they are almost equally divided in thirds about the anticipated effects of the state rules: more students on grade level (36%), more drop-outs (30%), no difference (24%).

The serious lack of public understanding about significant issues is a crisis, particularly in a gubernatorial and presidential election year. Many Charlotte-Mecklenburg voters will go to the polls without an understanding of educational issues that are increasingly important across the nation and the state.

Volunteerism in schools

When asked if community involvement is vital to quality public education, 81% of respondents "strongly agree" and 16% "somewhat agree." Over 59% of respondents volunteer less than once or twice a year and 20% volunteer daily, weekly, or monthly. Not surprisingly, parents volunteer at a higher rate than non-parents do. The three most common types of volunteer work include tutoring, participating in class events, and being a reading buddy.

Of those participants who are currently employed outside their home, 44% report that their place of employment allows employees to volunteer in public school during the workday with no loss of pay, 37% report that employees are not allowed, and 14% don't know.

I. Introduction

Each year since 1995 the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation [CMEF] has conducted a survey of community attitudes, perceptions, and expectations regarding public education: the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation's Annual Community Assessment.

The 2000 Community Assessment surveyed registered voters across Mecklenburg County's six Board of Education and Board of County Commissioners' districts. Between March 17 and April 1, 2000, telephone surveys were conducted with 1,245 registered voters, 200+ in each district. The sample is demographically balanced by district, race, sex and age. The margin of error is +/- 2.8% for the total sample and +/- 6.9% for each district.

Approximately ¾ of adults in Mecklenburg County are registered voters. This survey samples a random population of those voters rather than the population as a whole because registered voters are more likely than not to have an opinion on specific issues. Further, because these are the individuals who ideally go to the polls, their opinions carry weight with elected officials such as the School Board and Board of County Commissioners.

The 2000 Assessment surveyed voters on the following areas:

- Attitudes toward public education
- Attitudes and perceptions of CMS
- Perceptions of education decision-makers
- Community-supported positions
- Community knowledge of education issues

This report is organized accordingly. Complementing this report is the Slide Presentation 2000 (corresponding slides for each section are noted throughout the text) and the Community Assessment 2000 Executive Summary.

While some items have been measured over several years, other items were added this year as a result of the findings from the fall 1999 guided discussions and 2000 Education Summit that were a part of the Community Vision Initiative for Quality Public Education.

Please note:

(1) Throughout this text, the pronoun "we" refers to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation.

(2) Shading is used on tables to enhance clarity and readability. Unless otherwise noted, the shading has no other significance.

(3) As you read the tables, "n" refers to the sample size or the number of participants responding to a question. The sample size varies from year to year and may vary depending upon the question. For example, several questions are asked only of parents with children enrolled in CMS.

(4) For several of the questions, survey participants are asked to give us a response of 1-10 on a scale of 10, with 10 being the highest and 1 the lowest. For example, "On a 1-10 scale, how important are each of the following positions to you personally. A '1' means not all important and a '10' means of utmost importance. You can choose any number in between." When we report the results of these types of questions, we use a rating of 8-10 to indicate "high importance" or "strong support." We use a rating of 1-3 to indicate minimal to no importance or support.

(5) The results of the Community Assessment can be generalized to the population of registered voters in Mecklenburg County.

II. Demographics

Demographics for the 2000 Community Assessment include the following:

- The racial composition of survey participants is 75% white and 22% African-American with 1% each reporting Asian, American Indian, and "other" and 2% reporting that they are of Hispanic origin or descent.
- Approximately 48% of participants are between the ages of 35-54.
- 12% have lived in Mecklenburg County for five or less years; 15% for 6-10 years; 22% for 11-20 years; and, 50% for more than 20 years.
- 18% report their education level as high school graduate; 5% as completing special or technical training (which may be in addition to a high school diploma); 56% as having some college or a 4-year degree; and 18% as completing post-graduate study or an advanced degree.
- Total household income is reported as follows: 6% less than $20,000; 17% $20,000-$39,999; 23% $40,000-$59,999; 38% $60,000 or more; and 9% refused to answer.
- And, 70% report that they are <u>not</u> the parent or guardian of any children currently enrolled in grades K-12. Of the 30% of registered voters with children enrolled in grades K-12, 25% of registered voters have at least one child in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools, 6% in private or religious schools, 2% home schooled, and 1% in charter schools.

Of particular interest is that 70% of registered voters are not currently parents of school-age children; that is, they do not have children enrolled in grades K-12. Some of these voters may have preschool children and others adult children. Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority of voters may perceive themselves as not having the explicit or immediate stake in the quality of our public school system that comes with having school-age children.

Since 1995, the demographics have remained consistent with one exception. In 1997, 22% of participants reported having lived in Mecklenburg County for five or less years. We cannot explain this jump in registered voters. All other years, this figure has remained 12% or 14%. Since 1995, there has also been an increase in participants reporting total household income of more than $75,000 from 18% in 1995 to 28% in 2000. We speculate that if the increase in reported total household income continues, it may mean that more people moving into the County can afford and will choose to send their children to private schools. Thus, CMS must make the quality of education in our public schools attractive to these potential future residents and parents.

III. Attitudes Toward Public Education

This section examines general attitudes toward public education in Mecklenburg County: most important issue, school board representation, community involvement and volunteerism in public schools, and teaching (Slides 6-12 of the Slide Presentation 2000).

Most Important Issue

From among five issues, "improving public schools" remains the most important issue as it has since 1997 when this question was first asked; 69% of registered voters rated "improving public schools" either the most important or second most important issue:

Table 1: Most Important Issue

	Most Important Issue 2000 n=1245 reported as % of respondents	Most Important Issue 1999 n=1202 reported as % of respondents
Improving public schools	46	41
Preventing crime	21	25
Not raising taxes[1]	12	Not asked
Improving transportation	12	20
Don't know/refused	5	4
Maintaining the vitality of the local economy	4	1
Improving parks and recreation[1]	Not asked	3
All same importance	Not asked	7

[1]In 2000, "not raising taxes" was substituted for "improving parks and recreation" because the latter had received generally low responses of "most importance" and we felt that in an election year a question about taxes might be more relevant and timely.

In examining gender, age, and parental status; women, respondents between the ages of 18-54, and parents are more likely to choose "improving public schools" as the most important issue. This trend has been consistent over the years. In 1999, however, there was a gap of 15% points between African-Americans and whites – 53% of African-Americans indicated "improving public schools" was most important compared to 38% of whites. That gap decreased in 2000 to only a 7% point difference – 52% of African-Americans and 46% of whites.

School Board Representation

The majority of respondents (55%) feel that their school board representative should represent the best interests of the entire county; 33% of respondents feel that their school board representative should represent the best interests of their

district. These numbers have remained consistent since this question was introduced in 1998.

A slightly higher percentage of African-Americans and respondents 55 years of age and older feel the best interests of the County ought to be represented.

Community Involvement and Volunteerism

This year for the first time we asked respondents whether community involvement is vital to quality public education: 81% strongly agree and 16% somewhat agree that "community involvement is vital to quality public education." Last year, CMEF asked participants how much they supported the creation of a community vision for quality public education in the 21st century; 69% strongly supported the creation of a vision.

Not only did we seek to discover how much our community values community involvement, but we wanted to learn about whether community members actually serve as volunteers. We asked participants how often they volunteer in public schools: daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, once or twice a year, or less often.

Table 2: Volunteer Activities

	Total n=1245 reported as % of respondents	Child in school n=336 reported as % of respondents	No child in school n=905 reported as % of respondents
Daily	4	5	3
Weekly	7	15	3
Monthly	9	19	4
Quarterly	5	11	3
Once or twice a year	12	20	9
Less often	59	29	73
Don't know/refused	4	2	4

"Child in school" and "no child in school" do not add up to the total because some respondents did not report whether they had children enrolled in grades K-12.

Parents are more likely to volunteer in schools than are "non-parents." We also asked in what type of volunteer work participants engage. This was an open-ended question with many responses. Two of the top three volunteer activities common to both parents and non-parents were tutoring and being a reading buddy. Class events, extra-curricular activities, chaperoning trips, and mentoring were among those activities offered by anywhere from 10%-20% of respondents overall.

We also asked respondents who are currently employed outside the home (n=774) if their place of employment allows employees to volunteer in public schools during the workday with no loss of pay:

- 44% said employees were allowed to volunteer
- 37% said employees were not allowed
- 19% didn't know or refused to answer.

Teaching, A Valuable Profession

"How much do you agree that teaching is a valuable profession?" was yet another new question this year. Overwhelmingly, respondents strongly agreed (96%). Almost half of respondents indicated they would like a son or daughter of theirs to go into teaching:

Table 3: Support for son or daughter to pursue teaching as a profession

	Son n=1245 reported as % of respondents	Daughter n=1245 reported as % of respondents
Yes	45	49
No	34	32
It depends	12	12
Don't know	9	7

We asked respondents for the main reason they would or would not like a son or daughter to go into teaching. This was an open-ended question and responses were varied. However, the top reasons for wanting a child to go into teaching were (1) that it is a good and honorable profession and (2) that teachers can make a difference or be a role model. For both son and daughter these reasons were offered by about 20% and 11%, respectively, of respondents. The main reason respondents would not like a son or daughter to go into teaching was overwhelmingly "low salary," offered by about 45% of respondents. Discipline, the next reason, was offered by about 10% of respondents for both son and daughter.

IV. Attitudes and Perceptions of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools

This section examines equity; quality; parent satisfaction; and items of importance and perceptions of CMS performance (Slides 14-22 of the Slide Presentation 2000).

Equity (See also Community-supported positions)

Respondents were asked, "In terms of public schools which of these two statements better describes equity?"

a) Equity means equally distributing resources including teachers across all schools or students
b) Equity means some schools receive more resources than others do, so that some children can catch up to others

Of everyone polled, 60% of respondents describe equity as (a) "equally distributing resources" and 31% as (b) "some schools receive more." A majority of whites and African-Americans describe equity as "equal distribution." Further, in each district, at least half of registered voters also describe equity as "equal distribution." African-Americans by about 10% are slightly more likely than whites to describe equity as "some schools receive more:"

Table 4: Description of equity

	Equity "Equal distribution" reported as % of respondents	Equity "Some schools receive more" reported as % of respondents
Total (n=1245)	60	31
Whites (n=994)	62	29
African-Americans (n=231)	53	39
District 1 (n=206)	66	26
District 2 (n=207)	50	40
District 3 (n=213)	54	35
District 4 (n=204)	54	38
District 5 (n=203)	61	28
District 6 (n=212)	67	27

Please note that this question does not indicate which description respondents personally favor or support. It simply asks which statement better describes the term "equity."

However, we believe that the results of this question are particularly interesting given the conflicts in approving a new student assignment plan and controversy over school bonds. Is the School Board using the term "equity" the way a majority of the community describes it? If "equity" is a driving force in the new student assignment plan and school renovation and construction, it is imperative that the School Board and school system clearly define the term for the public.

Quality

Community perceptions of overall quality of CMS were explored through a variety of questions: CMS in comparison to two years ago, grading of public schools here and elsewhere, and parent satisfaction with their child's school.

The first question was, "Would you say the overall quality of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public School System is better, worse or about the same as it was two years ago?":

Table 5: Overall quality of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public School System

	2000 n=1240▸ reported as % of respondents	1999 n=1202 reported as % of respondents	1998 n=1206 reported as % of respondents
Better	20	25	25
Same	40	39	38
Worse	20	14	18
Don't know/refused	20	22	19

▸Base of 1240 includes registered voters living in Mecklenburg County two years or more.

There is a slight numeric increase in "worse" and decrease in "better" between this year and 1999. Certainly the publicity from the desegregation court case and public reaction to drafts of the new student assignment plan may have influenced this shift. Particularly interesting is how evenly this year's numbers fall out. Data collected in next year's (2001) Annual Community Assessment will assist in identifying whether these numeric shifts are indicative of a greater pattern.

On an open-ended question asking for the main reason respondents feel CMS is better or worse compared to two years ago, the following reasons were offered by at least 10% of registered voters:

- Reasons "better" included magnet programs, increased test and SAT scores, better grades, and general progress or improvement.
- Reasons "worse" included discipline.

A smaller number of registered voters, 6%, cited each of the following as additional reasons for why CMS is worse: overcrowding, too many changes/decision-making, quality of teachers, and allocation of funds.

Students receive grades of A, B, C, D, and F to denote the quality of their work. We asked the community to grade public schools in the nation, state, local district, and, for parents, their oldest child's school.

Here's what we found:

Table 6: Community grades for public schools in U.S., N.C., & CMS

	U.S. Schools n=1245 reported as % of respondents	N.C. Schools n=1245 reported as % of respondents	CMS n=1245 reported as % of respondents	Oldest Child's School n=261 reported as % of respondents
A	2	2	3	23
B	21	19	27	39
C	54	49	47	30
D	12	21	15	4
F	3	4	4	3
Don't know or refused	8	5	4	1
Total GPA	2.08	1.94	2.10	2.76

The community grades the nation's schools virtually identically to how the nation grades the schools as reported in the Gallup/PDK Poll on Public Education. Consistent with survey trends, grades increase slightly as respondents get closer to home. Note that CMS receives a higher percentage of the grade "B" and a slightly lower percentage of the grade "C" than the community gives to the state or nation. Most notable is that parents give their oldest child's school sharply higher grades than CMS as a whole.

We can conjecture that the child's school receives a higher grade because this is what parents know, where they are comfortable and where they have an investment. Supporting this inference is the increase in confidence in teachers and principals – those educators who are school-based and with whom parents have the most immediate contact. It is ironic, though, that these grades are significantly higher than CMS as a whole as these schools actually make up the CMS system.

Lastly, the majority of survey respondents (61%) think that public schools today demand too little work from the students. Only 10% think the public schools demand too much and 13% offered voluntarily that it is about right. 22% of

parents of public, private, and home-schooled children (n=336) think that the workload is about right compared to 9% of non-parents (n=905).

Parent Satisfaction

This year for the first time parents with a child or children enrolled in CMS were asked how satisfied they are with their child's/children's education. Of CMS parents surveyed, 25% reported that they were "very satisfied" with their child's/children's education and 46% reported "somewhat satisfied":

Table 7: CMS parents satisfaction with child's education

	CMS Parents n=268 reported as % of respondents
Very Satisfied	25
Somewhat Satisfied	46
Somewhat Dissatisfied	22
Very Dissatisfied	7
Don't Know/Refused	1

Parents with children enrolled in CMS were also asked a series of questions about communication between school and home. Overall, parents say communication is okay:

Table 8: CMS parents satisfaction with communication and relationship between school and home

	CMS Parents reporting on oldest child's school n=261 reported as % of respondents	
	Strong Agreement	Total Agreement*
School encourages parental involvement	55	86
Parents receive interim reports about progress	54	80
School works hard to make parent meetings convenient to parents	47	82
Staff listens to parents' ideas	38	75
Staff provides ideas about how to improve child's learning at home	30	66

* Includes "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree"

Issues of Importance and Perception of CMS Performance

Each year we ask survey participants to tell us how important a number of issues are to them personally. We then ask them to rate how CMS is doing in those areas, "Perception of CMS Performance."

The following table reports all items for which importance and perception of performance were measured:

Table 9: Issues of importance and perception of CMS performance (8-10 on a scale of 1-10)

Items	2000 High Importance n=1245 reported as % of respondents	2000 CMS High Performance n=1245 reported as % of respondents
Emphasize the basics, such as reading, writing, and math	94	33
Making students and teachers feel safe at school	92	34
Increase teacher salary	83	22
Ensuring equity of facilities and resources among the schools	82	18
Reduce drop-outs	81	18
Teach citizenship	77	23
Renovate and update present schools	76	21
Teach moral values	74	20
Provide workplace skills	73	20
Provide more computers and high tech resources for students	72	25
Diversity (Provide an environment where children interact with other children of diverse ethnic, racial and economic backgrounds)	72	35
Provide career exploration	69	21
Give parents and students a choice of schools to attend	59	21
Build new schools	58	28
Teach foreign languages in the schools	57	26
Increase taxes to fund schools	42	Not asked

"Providing career exploration," "giving parents and students a choice of schools to attend," and "teaching foreign languages in the schools" are three new items added in 2000 as a result of findings from the fall 1999 guided discussions and 2000 Education Summit.

The importance of and perception of CMS performance on safety, reducing the drop-out rate, and teaching citizenship were measured in 1999 in a slightly different question. The next two tables illustrate 2000 and 1999 results.

Table 10 Issues of importance of and perception of CMS performance: safety, drop-out rate, teaching citizenship (8-10 on a scale of 1-10)

Item	2000 Q15 High Importance* n=1245 reported as % of respondents	2000 Q21 CMS High Performance** n=1245 reported as % of respondents
Making students and teachers feel safe at school	92	34
Reducing the drop-out rate	81	18
Teaching citizenship in the schools	77	23

* Q15 How important is each of the following positions to you personally?
** Q21 Please rate the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in the following areas.

Table 11: Issues of importance/support and perception of CMS performance: safety, drop-out rate, teaching citizenship (8-10 on a scale of 1-10)

Item	1999 Q7 High Importance* n=1202 reported as % of respondents	1999 Q11 CMS High Performance** n=1202 reported as % of respondents
Providing a safe environment for learning	93	20 (Wording: "maintaining discipline and order in the classroom")
Reducing/lowering the drop-out rate	84	19
Teaching students/children to be good citizens	86	23

* Q7 Please tell me how important it is that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg public schools achieve the following.
** Q11 Please rate the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in the following areas.

For the purpose of this comparison, we assume that "making students and teachers feel safe at school" and "providing a safe environment for learning" are relatively synonymous in that each statement focuses on the overall school environment. In 1999, only 20% of respondents rated CMS' performance on maintaining discipline and order in the classroom as high. But, in 2000 34% of respondents rated CMS' performance as high on the safety of schools. This rating will serve as a marker in future assessments of the perceived safety of our public

schools. Because we believe that 'overall safety' and 'discipline in the classroom' are distinct from each other, we will measure these items separately in the future.

Other items from table 9 were measured in prior years as degree of support rather than importance and then compared to ratings of perception of CMS performance. We hypothesize that there is a correlation between importance and support; that is, we assume respondents will rate items of high importance also as items that they would highly support. Therefore, the table below presents the ratings over time on these items.

Table 12: Items of high importance or support compared to high perceptions of CMS performance [High Importance or Support/High Perception of Performance] (8-10 on a scale of 1-10)

Item	2000 n=1245 reported as % of respondents	1999 n=1202 reported as % of respondents	1998 n=1206 reported as % of respondents	1997 n=1205 reported as % of respondents	1996 n=1205 reported as % of respondents
Emphasize the basics	94/33	89/29	90/30	93/28	90/28
Provide workplace skills Prior to 2000, "preparing students to directly enter the workforce"	73/20	82/16	83/15	86/19	85/18
Provide more computers	72/25	68/26	70/26	66/25	74/31
Diversity	72/35	69/36	72/34	66/32	69/37

Perceptions of high CMS performance are traditionally low, a trend in survey research comparing values or expectations and performance. Perception of CMS performance is highest on emphasizing the basics, student/teacher safety, and providing a diverse environment. Nonetheless, the gap is significant between what the community says it values and how it feels CMS is performing. Such a gap may be attributable in part to a disconnect between what people feel is important and what they think is being taught in CMS or is included in the North Carolina Course of Study.

V. Perceptions of Education Decision-Makers

This section examines the degree of community trust and confidence in education decision-makers, including school-based personnel, parents, and elected officials. (Slides 24-25 of the Slide Presentation 2000).

We asked how much confidence participants had in individuals' ability to make good decisions about public education in CMS. Consistent with previous years, those individuals closest to students (teachers, principals, and parents) and the Superintendent receive the highest percentage of high confidence. The Board of Education is among the lowest though it is higher than the Board of County Commissioners:

Table 13: High confidence in education decision-makers (8-10 on a scale of 1-10)

	2000 **n=1245 reported as % of respondents**	1999 n=1202 reported as % of respondents	1998 n=1206 reported as % of respondents	1997 n=1205 reported as % of respondents	1996 n=1205 reported as % of respondents
Teachers	**60**	50	52	53	61
Principals	**49**	41	40	44	47
Superintendent	**44**	45	42	42	35*
Parents	**42**	44	43	45	53
Board of Education Prior to 2000, "school board members"	**27**	31	26	25	26
Organizations for Education Improvement Prior to 2000, "community organizations for the improvement of education"	23	28	29	26	30
Board of County Commissioners Prior to 2000, "elected officials"	17	16	13	13	16

*The Community Assessment is conducted annually in or around March. The current Superintendent began his tenure in August of 1996.

Between 1996-1999, high confidence in teachers had decreased although they always received the highest percentage of "high confidence" responses. This year, however, high confidence in teachers increased significantly from 50% in 1999 to 60%. Like teachers, high confidence in principals had been decreasing but

increased from 41% in 1999 to 49% in 2000. Even with some slight wording changes, for example from "School board members" to "Board of Education," other ratings for confidence in decision-making have remained consistent over the years.

In addition to confidence in decision-making, we asked participants how much trust they had in statements and promises made by CMS. Only 15% of respondents rate their level of trust as high, 59% fall in the middle, and 24% report little or no trust. These ratings are consistent with low confidence in decision-making for the Board of Education. This survey was conducted prior to the latest attempt to pass a new student assignment plan, but the desegregation case, new student assignment plan drafts, and ensuing publicity have garnered little support for the School Board. Low ratings of trust and confidence are not surprising in the current political climate.

VI. Community-Supported Positions

This section examines the degree of community support on a variety of topics as well as support of optional activities when schools become overcrowded (Slides 27-30 of Slide Presentation 2000).

We asked participants how much they supported each of the following items (table on two pages):

Table 14: Community-supported positions (8-10 on a scale of 1-10)

	2000 n=1245 reported as % of respondents	1999 n=1202 reported as % of respondents	1998 n=1206 reported as % of respondents	1997 n=1205 reported as % of respondents	1996 n=1205 reported as % of respondents	1995 n=1807 reported as % of respondents
Reducing class size Prior to 2000, question asked "how important is it that CMS [reduces] class size"	71	68	66	67	Not asked	Not asked
Assigning children to schools so that no schools are overcrowded	61	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked
Ensure economically disadvantaged students are not concentrated in a few schools	56	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked
Establishing ways other than student assignment to ensure that students are exposed to racial, social, or economic diversity	56	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked
Use magnet schools to increase racial, social, and economic diversity	43	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked

Assign children to schools closest to home even if it results in the concentration of economically disadvantaged children in a few schools	38	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked
Assign children to their neighborhood schools, even if it means a number of schools will become racially segregated Prior to 1998, question read only "assigning children to neighborhood schools." From 1998 to the present, addition of caveat "even if it means . . . racially segregated."	36	46	48	69	74	75
Increase the amount of time students spend in schools by increasing the number of days in the school year	34	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked
Grant tuition vouchers to parents who choose to send their children to private schools	29	27	26	33	Not asked	Not asked
Increase the amount of time students spend in school by lengthening the school day	26	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked
Bus to achieve racial balance	23	25	24	28	30	29

Most of these items are asked this year for the first time. Reducing class size and assigning students to avoid overcrowding are strongly supported, consistent with concerns that emerged throughout the fall 1999 guided discussions, the 2000 Education Summit, and open-ended responses to why CMS is worse as compared to two years ago. African-Americans are slightly more likely than whites to strongly support both of these items (table on next page):

Table 15: Racial support for reducing class size and assigning children so that no schools become overcrowded (8-10 on a scale of 1-10)

	2000 **Whites** **Strong Support** **n=994** **reported as % of respondents**	2000 African-Americans Strong Support n=231 reported as % of respondents
Reducing Class Size	70	81
Assigning children to schools so that no schools are overcrowded	57	76

However, the percentage of both whites and African-Americans who do not support these items is minimal.

Three questions have been tracked for multiple years: vouchers, neighborhood school assignment, and busing for racial balance. "Strong support" for vouchers has remained consistently low over the years with an average of 29% of respondents rating it an 8-10 on a scale of 1-10.

Support ratings for neighborhood school assignment "even if it means a number of schools will become racially segregated" and busing to achieve racial balance suggest strong racial differences of opinion. Among African-Americans, 51% strongly support busing to achieve racial balance while 15% express little or no support. Among whites, the figures are reversed: 45% strongly do not support busing, while just 16% strongly favor it. The racial pattern was similar when respondents were asked about neighborhood assignment "even if it means a number of schools will become racially segregated." Whites at 41% were more likely than African-Americans at 21% to favor neighborhood assignment (table on next page and see also table 14):

Table 16: Racial support for neighborhood schools and busing

	2000 Whites n=994 reported as % of respondents		2000 African-American n=231 reported as % of respondents		2000 Total polled n=1245 reported as % of respondents
	Strong Support 8-10 on a scale of 1-10	Do not or low Support 1-3 on a scale of 1-10	Strong Support 8-10 on a scale of 1-10	Do not or low Support 1-3 on a scale of 1-10	Strong Support 8-10 on a scale of 1-10
Neighbor-hood schools even if it means some schools segregated	41	16	21	45	36
Busing to achieve racial balance	15	45	51	15	23

Of everyone polled, "strong support" for busing has remained constant between 1999-2000 at about 24%; overall, "strong support" for neighborhood schools, even if it means a number of schools will become racially segregated, decreased from 46% in 1999 to 36% in 2000.

We also tested community support for possible actions to alleviate overcrowding. This is a new question, and we found fairly minimal "strong support" for the proposed activities though increasing taxes led the list with 39% of respondents "strongly supporting" it (table on next page):

Table 17: Support for actions to alleviate overcrowding

	2000 **Strong Support** **8-10 on a scale of 1-10** **n=1245** **reported as % of respondents**	2000 Support 6-7 on a scale of 1-10 n=1245 reported as % of respondents
Increase taxes to build more schools/classrooms	39	21
Mandatory year-round calendar	30	13
Add temporary classrooms/trailers	28	18
Half morning/Half afternoon split sessions	8	9
Make more classrooms by eliminating cafeteria, library, gyms . . .	4	3

We asked several questions related to taxes. In table 9, we reported that 42% of respondents think increasing taxes to fund schools is "highly important." An additional 21% of respondents think increasing taxes is important (6-7 on a scale of 1-10). Therefore, in 2000, about 60% of registered voters indicated that increasing taxes to fund schools is at least important.

This year, we also asked to what degree participants supported increasing taxes to build more schools/classrooms in order to alleviate overcrowding in schools (Table 17). 39% of registered voters "strongly supported" increasing taxes in this context. An additional 21% rated a tax increase 6-7 on a scale of 1-10. Therefore, again, 60% of registered voters supported a tax increase.

In prior years, we asked participants how much they supported tax increases to fund the schools. Between 1999-1996, an average of 44% of respondents "strongly supported" (8-10 on a scale of 1-10) tax increases to fund schools.

These results suggest that improving public schools is considered more important than not raising taxes and that more people than not would support, albeit not enthusiastically, a tax increase to fund public school improvement.

VII. Community Knowledge of Education Issues

This section examines community knowledge of several key state and national issues, including vouchers, charter schools, and the new No-Social-Promotion policies (Slides 32-35 of Slide Presentation 2000).

With regard to knowledge and understanding of school vouchers and charter schools, 58% of the population report that they know very little or nothing about either one while 29% report they know something and approximately 13% that they know a lot. This means that less than half of the population knows something about vouchers and charters.

Table 18: Knowledge of issues (2000)

Knowledge of Issues N=1245 reported as % of respondents				
	% Know A Lot	% Know Some	% Know Very Little	% Know Nothing
Vouchers	13	29	28	30
Charters	12	29	30	28
No-social promotion rules	9	19	30	41

With regard to new state rules against social promotion, 71% of the population report they know very little or nothing (see table above). Of the 28% who report they know some or a lot about the standards, they are almost equally divided in thirds about the anticipated effects of the state rules: more students on grade level (36%), more drop-outs (30%), no difference (24%).

The serious lack of public understanding on significant issues is a crisis, particularly in a gubernatorial and presidential election year. Many Charlotte-Mecklenburg voters will go to the polls without an understanding of educational issues that are increasingly important across the nation and the state.

Appendix A
Community Assessment 2000 Questionnaire

ID # _____	**JOB # 539**	DATE:
REP # _____	DRAFT 10	START TIME:
PAGE # _____	3/17/00	END TIME:
PHONE # _____	EDITOR: _____	MINUTES:
	VERIFIED: _____	INTERVIEWER #
DISTRICT: 1 2 3 4 5 6	SEX: M - 1 / F - 2 _	ZIPCODE

2000 CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG EDUCATION FOUNDATION STUDY
KPC RESEARCH, P.O. BOX 35334, CHARLOTTE, N.C. 28235-5334

"Hello. I am _____ with KPC Research. We are doing a survey about community issues in Mecklenburg County. Let me assure you we are not selling anything. Is this **(VERIFY PHONE NUMBER? IF NO, TERMINATE INTERVIEW)**. And is this household located on **(STREET NAME ON SAMPLE. IF NO, TERMINATE INTERVIEW. RECORD AS TE1)**. May I speak
to . . . .

(USE THE HIGHLIGHTED RESPONDENT SELECTION)

A: May I speak to the **youngest man** currently living in this household who is **a registered voter**?

IF NO MALE REG VOTERS LIVE IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK AA

AA. May I speak to the **youngest woman** currently living in this household who is a **registered voter**?

[ ] CHECK

B: May I speak to the **oldest man** currently living in this household who is a **registered voter**?

IF NO MALE REG VOTERS LIVE IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK BB

BB. May I speak to the **oldest woman** currently living in this household who is a **registered voter**?

[ ] CHECK

C: May I speak to the **oldest woman** currently living in this household who is a **registered voter**?

IF NO FEMALE REG VOTERS LIVE IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK CC

CC. May I speak to the **oldest man** currently living in this household who is a **registered voter**?

[ ] CHECK

D: May I speak to the **youngest woman** currently living in this household who is a **registered voter**?

I. IF NO FEMALE REG VOTERS LIVE IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK DD

DD. May I speak to the **youngest man** currently living in this household who is a **registered voter**?

[ ] CHECK

IF NO REGISTERED VOTERS IN HOUSEHOLD TERMINATE INTERVIEW AND RECORD AS TE2.

(IF DIFFERENT PERSON, REINTRODUCE) As I said, we want to ask a few questions about community issues in Mecklenburg County. We are not expecting you to have an answer for all our questions, so please feel free to let me know when that is the case. Because I don't want to take a lot of your time, we will move quickly through this survey.

1. I'd like you to rank the following five issues in terms of how important each issue is to Mecklenburg County. The five issues are: Improving transportation, including road repair, construction and public transportation; maintaining the vitality of the local economy; preventing crime; improving public schools; and not raising taxes. Which issue do you feel is the most important: Improving transportation; maintaining the vitality of the local economy; preventing crime; improving public schools; OR not raising taxes. **(ROTATE LIST)**

   Which is the second most important?

   Which is the third most important?

   Which is the next most important: (**CODE 1 FOR MOST IMPORTANT, 2 FOR SECOND MOST, 3 FOR THIRD, 4 FOR NEXT**)

   Improving transportation, including road repair, construction, and public transportation
   Maintaining the vitality of the local economy

   Preventing crime
   Improving public schools

   Not raising taxes

   ALL SHOULD RECEIVE THE SAME

   DON'T KNOW/REFUSED

---

2. How many years have you lived in Mecklenburg County?

   YEARS:_____
   LESS THAN ONE YEAR 00
   DK/REFUSED 99

IF Q2 >=2 YEARS ASK Q3. ELSE GO TO Q5.

3. Would you say the overall quality of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public School System is better, worse or about the same as it was two years ago?

   BETTER **(ASKQ4)** 1
   WORSE **(ASKQ4)** 2
   ABOUT SAME **(GO TO Q7)** 3
   DK/REFUSED **(GO TO Q7)** 4

---

4. What is the main reason you feel this way? **PROBE FOR SPECIFICS. ONE RESPONSE ONLY.**

   _____

   DK/REFUSED .....

   GO TO Q7

IF Q2 <2 ASK Q5. ELSE GO TO Q7.

5. Would you say the overall quality of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public School System is better, worse or about the same as your previous school system?

   BETTER **(GO TO Q6)** 1
   WORSE **(GO TO Q6)** 2
   ABOUT SAME **(GO TO Q7)** 3
   DK/REFUSED **(GO TO Q7)** 4

---

6. What is the main reason you feel this way? **PROBE FOR SPECIFICS. ONE RESPONSE ONLY.**

---

7. Are you the parent or guardian of any children in grades K through 12 who are currently enrolled in **(READ LIST)**

	YES	NO	DK/REF
a) Charlotte-Mecklenburg public school system	1	2	3
b) Private or religious school	1	2	3
c) A charter school	1	2	3
d) Home schooled	1	2	3

(IF NO TO ALL – GO TO Q10)

ASK IF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN MULTIPLE TYPES OF SCHOOLS.

8. Because we will be asking about your oldest child's school, is your oldest child currently enrolled in . . . **(READ LIST)**.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public School 1
Private or religious school 2
Charter School 3
or home schooled 4
DK/REFUSED 5

---

9. On the whole, are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with your child's or children's education who are enrolled in . . . **(READ LIST)**

	VERY SATIS	SOME SAT	SOME DISSAT	VERY DISSAT	D R
ASK Q9A IF Q7A=1. A) Charlotte-Mecklenburg public school	1	2	3	4	
ASK Q9B IF Q7B=1. B) Private or religious school	1	2	3	4	

ASK EVERYONE.

10. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements. **(ROTATE)**

	STR AGREE	SOME AGREE	SOME DISAGR	STR DISAGREE	D R
a) Community involvement is vital to quality public education	1	2	3	4	
b) Teaching is a valuable profession	1	2	3	4	

---

11. In terms of pubic schools, which of these two statements better describes Equity? **(ROTATE THE ORDER OF THE STATEMENTS – READ LIST)**

a) Equity means equally distributing resources including teachers across all schools or students 1
b) Equity means some schools receive more resources than others do, so that some children can catch up to others 2
NEITHER/BOTH 3
DK/REF 4

---

12. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much confidence do you have in these individuals' ability to .....make good decisions about public education in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. A "1" means you ..have no confidence at all and "10" means you have **complete** confidence. Let "2" through "9" ..... represent your in-between feelings. How about local . . . **(READ LIST BEGINNING WITH HIGHLIGHT)**

	NO CONF									COMPLETE CONF	DK/ REF
▶ a) Principals	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11
b) Teachers	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11
c) Board of education	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11
d) Organizations for the improvement											

of education ..... 01 ..... 02 ..... 03 ..... 04 ..... 05 ..... 06 ..... 07 ..... 08 ..... 09 ..... 10 11

e) Parents ..... 01 ..... 02 ..... 03 ..... 04 ..... 05 ..... 06 ..... 07 ..... 08 ..... 09 ..... 10 11
f) Superintendent of schools ..... 01 ..... 02 ..... 03 ..... 04 ..... 05 ..... 06 ..... 07 ..... 08 ..... 09 ..... 10 11
g) Board of county commissioners ..... 01 ..... 02 ..... 03 ..... 04 ..... 05 ..... 06 ..... 07 ..... 08 ..... 09 ..... 10 11

---

13. Thinking about the school board, do you personally feel your district school board representative should represent the best interests of your district or the best interests of the entire county?

YOUR DISTRICT .....
ENTIRE COUNTY .....
BOTH .....
DK/REFUSED .....

---

14. With regard to providing quality public education, how much trust do you have in statements and promises made by the Charlotte Mecklenburg school system. Please use a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means you have **no** trust at all and "10" means you have **total** trust. Let "2" through "9" represent your in-between feelings.

	NO TRUST									COMPLETE TRUST	DK/ REF
a) CHAR-MECK SCHOOL SYSTEM	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11

---

15. On a 1-to-10 scale, how important are each of the following positions to you personally. A "1" means **not at all** important and a "10" means of **utmost** importance. You can choose any number in between. How about . . . **(READ LIST BEGINNING WITH HIGHLIGHT)**

	NOT AT ALL IMP									UTMOST IMP	D R
a) Increasing teachers' salaries	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
b) Providing more computers and high tech resources for students	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
c) Building new schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
d) Renovating and updating present schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
e) Increasing taxes to fund the schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
f) Emphasizing the basics, such as reading, writing and math	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
g) Teaching moral values in the schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
h) Teaching citizenship in the schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
i) Providing an environment where children interact with other children of diverse ethnic, racial and economic backgrounds	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
j) Ensuring equity of facilities and resources among the schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
k) Providing career exploration in the schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
l) Providing workplace skills in the schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
m) Teaching foreign languages in the schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
n) Reducing the drop-out rate	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
o) Giving parents and students a choice of schools to attend	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
p) Making students and teachers feel safe at school	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1

16. On a 1-to-10 scale, how much do you support each of the following positions. A "1" means you do **not at all** support that position and a "10" means you **strongly** support it. You can choose any number in between. How about . . . **(READ LIST BEGINNING WITH HIGHLIGHT)**

	NOT AT ALL SUPPORT									STRONGLY SUPPORT	D R
a) Using magnet schools to increase racial, social and economic diversity	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
b) Ensuring that economically disadvantaged students are not concentrated in a few schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
c) Establishing ways other than student assignment to ensure that students are exposed to racial, social or economic diversity	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
d) Granting tuition vouchers to parents who choose to send their children to private schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
e) Busing students to achieve racial balance	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
f) Assigning children to their neighborhood schools, even if it means a number of schools will become racially segregated	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
g) Assigning children to the schools closest to their homes, even if it results in the concentration of economically disadvantaged children in a few schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
h) Reducing class size	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
i) Assigning children to schools so that no schools are overcrowded	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
j) Increasing the amount of time students spend in school by lengthening the school day	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
k) Increasing the amount of time students spend in school by increasing the number of days in the school year	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1

17. On a 1-to-10 scale, how much do you support each of the following actions when schools become overcrowded. A "1" means you do **not at all** support that position and a "10" means you **strongly** support it. You can choose any number in between. How about . . . **(READ LIST BEGINNING WITH HIGHLIGHT)**

	NOT AT ALL SUPPORT									STRONGLY SUPPORT	D R
a) Adding as many temporary classrooms or trailers as possible	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
b) Making all schools follow a mandatory year-round calendar	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
c) Increasing taxes to build more classrooms and new schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
d) Building more classrooms by eliminating cafeterias, libraries, gymnasiums, and multi-purpose rooms	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
e) Running split sessions with half the students in school only in the mornings and the other half only in the afternoons	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	

18. Please tell me if you know a lot, some, very little, or nothing about the following and how they work. How about . . . **(READ LIST)**?

	A LOT	SOME	VERY LITTLE	NOTHING	DK/ REF
a) School vouchers	1	2	3	4	5
b) Charter schools	1	2	3	4	5

---

19. Would you say you know a lot, some, very little, or nothing about the new state rules against social promotion in certain grades?

A LOT (**ASK Q20**) 1
SOME (**ASK Q20**) 2
VERY LITTLE (**GO TO Q21**) 3
NOTHING (**GO TO Q21**) 4
DK/REF (**GO TO Q21**) 5

---

20. Do you personally think the new state rules against social promotion in certain grades is more likely to result in more students on grade level, more dropouts, or will it make no difference?

MORE STUDENTS ON GRADE LEVEL 1
MORE DROPOUTS 2
NO DIFFERENCE 3
DK/REFUSED 4

---

21. Please rate the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in the following areas. We'll use a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means the schools are doing a **poor** job and "10" means they are doing a **great** job. You may use any number in between. How about . . . **(READ LIST BEGINNING WITH HIGHLIGHT)**

	POOR JOB									GREAT JOB	D R
a) Increasing teachers' salaries	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
b) Providing more computers and high tech resources for students	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
c) Building new schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
d) Renovating and updating present schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
e) Emphasizing the basics, such as reading, writing and math	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
f) Teaching moral values in the schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
g) Teaching citizenship in the schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
h) Providing an environment where children interact with other children of diverse ethnic, racial and economic backgrounds	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
i) Ensuring equity of facilities and resources among the schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
j) Providing career exploration in the schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
k) Providing workplace skills in the schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
l) Teaching foreign languages in the schools	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
m) Reducing the drop-out rate	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
n) Giving parents and students a choice of schools to attend	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1
o) Making students and teachers feel safe at school	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	1

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

22. Are you currently employed outside the home?

YES 1
NO **(GOTO Q24)** 2
DK/REFUSED **(GOTO Q24)** 3

---

23. Does your place of employment allow employees to volunteer in public schools during the workday with no loss of pay?

YES 1
NO 2
NOT SURE 3
REFUSED 4

---

24. How often do you, personally, volunteer in the public schools? Would you say daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, once or twice a year, or less often?

DAILY 1
WEEKLY 2
MONTHLY 3
QUARTERLY 4
ONCE OR TWICE A YEAR 5
LESS OFTEN **(GO TO Q26)** 6
DK/REFUSED **(GO TO Q26)** 7

---

25. When you volunteer, what types of work do you do?
DO NOT READ LIST -- ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES
PROBE: Anything else?

CHAPERONE TRIP 01
CLASS EVENTS 02
CLASS PARTIES 03
EXAM PROCTOR 04
EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES 05
LUNCH BUDDY 06
MENTOR 07
OFFICE WORK 08
READING BUDDY 09
TUTOR 10
OTHER 11

(SPECIFY_____**)**

DK/REFUSED 12

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26. Next, students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and Fail to denote the quality of their work. What grade would you give . . . (READ LIST)

	A	B	C	D	F	D R
a) Public Schools in the United States	1	2	3	4	5	
b) Public Schools in the state of North Carolina	1	2	3	4	5	
c) The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools	1	2	3	4	5	
ASK Q26D ONLY OF PARENTS OF KID(S) IN CMS, PRIVATE OR CHARTER SCHOOL						
d) Your oldest child's school	1	2	3	4	5	

IF PARENT OF CHILD ENROLLED IN PRIVATE OR CMS, ASK Q27. ELSE GO TO Q28.

27. Thinking about your oldest child, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements. **(ROTATE)**

	STRONG AGREE	SOME AGR	SOME DISAGR	STRONG DISAGREE	D R
a) My child's school encourages parents to get involved in their child's education	1	2	3	4	
b) My child's school has given me ideas about how to improve learning at home	1	2	3	4	
c) I receive communication between report cards about my child's progress in school	1	2	3	4	
d) Staff members at my child's school listen to my ideas about my child's education	1	2	3	4	

e) My child's school works hard to offer parent meetings, parent-teacher conferences, workshops and family events at times and places that are convenient to parents ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 .....

ASK EVERYONE

28. Do you think our public schools today demand too much work or too little work from the students?

TOO MUCH 1
TOO LITTLE 2
ABOUT RIGHT (VOLUNTARY) 3
DK/REFUSED 4

29. Would you like to have a daughter of yours go into teaching or not?

YES **(ASK Q30)** 1
NO **(GO TO Q31)** 2
IT DEPENDS (VOLUNTARY) **(GO TO Q32)** 3
DK/REFUSED **(GO TO Q32)** 4

30. What is the main reason you would like to have a daughter go into teaching?
PROBE FOR SPECIFICS. ONE RESPONSE ONLY.

DK/REFUSED 00

GO TO Q32

31. What is the main reason you would not like to have a daughter go into teaching?
PROBE FOR SPECIFICS. ONE RESPONSE ONLY.

DK/REFUSED 00

32. Would you like to have a son of yours go into teaching or not?

YES **(GO TO Q33)** 1
NO **(GO TO Q34)** 2
IT DEPENDS (VOLUNTARY) **(GO TO Q35)** 3
DK/REFUSED **(GO TO Q35)** 4

33. What is the main reason you would like to have a son go into teaching?
PROBE FOR SPECIFICS. ONE RESPONSE ONLY.

DK/REFUSED 00

GO TO Q35

34. What is the main reason you would not like to have a son go into teaching?
PROBE FOR SPECIFICS. ONE RESPONSE ONLY.

DK/REFUSED.....00

35. I am going to read a list of education programs and organizations. Please tell me which of the following statements best describes your awareness of each organization or program: I've never heard of it, I've heard of it but don't know much about it, or I am familiar with it? How about . . . **(READ LIST. ROTATE.) READ RESPONSE CATEGORIES AGAIN IF NECESSARY.**

	NEVER HEARD OF	DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT	FAMILIAR	DK/ REF
a) Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation	1	2	3	4
b) Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation's Community Vision for Quality Public Education	1	2	3	4
c) Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' Bright Beginnings	1	2	3	4
e) North Carolina Smart Start Program	1	2	3	4
f) Federal Government's Head Start Program	1	2	3	4
g) North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program	1	2	3	4

36. Excluding friends and relatives, what is your main source of information about education issues and schools in Mecklenburg County? **(DO NOT READ LIST)**

CHILD'S SCHOOL.....01
INTERNET/WEB.....02
MAIL.....03
NEWSPAPER.....04
(SPECIFY_____)
RADIO.....05
SCHOOL LEADERS.....06
TELEVISION.....07
(SPECIFY_____)
OTHER.....08
(SPECIFY_____)
DK/REFUSED.....09

The following questions are simply used to compare different groups of people.

A. Counting yourself, how many adults, age 18 or older, live in your household? _____ # ADULTS
DK/REFUSED 9

B. How many children, age 17 or younger, live in this household? CHILDREN:_____ #
DK/REFUSED.....9

C. Are you married, separated, divorced, widowed or have you never been married?

MARRIED.....1
SEPARATED.....2
DIVORCED.....3
WIDOWED.....4
NEVER MARRIED.....5
DK/REFUSED.....6

D. What is your age?
AGE:_____

DK/REFUSED 99

(IF DK OR REFUSED SAY:) I don't need to know exactly. Could you tell me if you are 18 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55 to 64, 65 or older?

E. What is your race?

WHITE 1
BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN 2
AMERICAN INDIAN 3
ASIAN 4
OTHER 5
DK/REFUSED 6

F. Are you of Hispanic origin or descent?

YES 1
NO 2
DK/REFUSED 3

G. What was the last grade of school you completed?

8TH GRADE OR LESS 1
SOME HIGH SCHOOL (NOT H.S. GRADUATE) 2
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE 3
SPECIAL/TECHNICAL TRAINING (NOT COLLEGE) 4
SOME COLLEGE (NOT GRAD FROM 4-YEAR COLLEGE) 5
COLLEGE GRADUATE (FROM 4-YEAR COLLEGE) 6
POST-GRADUATE STUDY 7
ADVANCED DEGREE (MS, MBA, PHD) 8
DK/REFUSED 9

H. Finally, was your total household income last year before taxes -- below $40,000 or above $40,000?

(IF SAY EXACTLY $40,000, CIRCLE CODE "1" UNDER QH2 BELOW)

BELOW $40,000 ..... (1) ABOVE $40,000 ..... (2)

REFUSED **(READ ENDING)** (3)

H1. And was that ...

(READ LIST)
Less than $20,000 1
$20,000 to $30,000 2
or $30,000 to $40,000 3

DK/REFUSED 4

H2. And was that ... **(READ LIST)**

$40,000 to $50,000 1
$50,000 to $60,000 2
$60,000 to $75,000 3
or more than $75,000 4

DK/REFUSED 5

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation is an independent advocate that works to empower the community to improve and ensure quality public education for every child.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation advocates for quality public education through programs, partnerships, and research and policy initiatives, all of which involve public engagement and long-term system-wide educational reform.

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